

NEVER GIVE UP!

Today is the 6th and last Sunday of Lent, the Sunday before Easter, which formally commences the Holy Week. In the celebrations today, the Church commemorates Christ's triumphal entry into Jerusalem when olive and palm branches were strewn in his path to accomplish his paschal mystery. In many ways, Palm Sunday is the overture to Holy Week since it contains all the themes from this day to the following Sunday. The events of the passion narrative will also be broken and reflected into different bits within the week.

The most distinctive ceremonies of the day are the **blessing of the palms, the procession, and the reading of passion**. The red vestment worn by the presider today symbolizes the royalty of Christ, which this feast celebrates. Therefore, today's celebration is a prefigurement of our anticipated triumphal entry into the heavenly Jerusalem as Christ leads on. By his death, Jesus destroyed death, and by his rising, he restored our life. The procession is not a mere triumphal march but Christ's journey with his people to Calvary and the great act of redemption. We identify with Christ's disposition to accept the cross for our salvation by a joyful entrance in this liturgy.

The Gospel passion we read describes the humility, determination, and perseverance of Jesus in the face of his suffering, which the 1st reading, and the 2nd reading point out in different ways. Like Jesus' suffering, we see various aspects of the sufferings we face in our lives. For example, the sufferings of denial, betrayal, abandonment, fear, anxiety, mockery, and physical suffering, but in all these, Jesus trusted in God for strength to accomplish his mission. Let this Holy Week help us to reflect more on the sufferings of Christ, as they relate to us in different ways, and never give up on our life struggles, but always trust in God as Jesus did. Amen.